

15. The process as claimed in Claim 14, comprising
storing the semiconductor wafer in deionized water after
contact with the aqueous treatment agent solution.

CS Please add new claim 16 which is based upon original claim 2
as follows:

16. The process according to claim 14, comprising
bringing the semiconductor wafer into contact with the
aqueous treatment agent solution containing an oxidizing agent and
an alkaline component.

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this patent application is respectfully
requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following
remarks.

The amendments to this patent application are as follows.
Claim 1 has been canceled without prejudice and has been rewritten
as new independent claim 14. Because independent claim 14 includes
the subject matter of dependent claims 3, 4 and 5, these claims
have now been canceled without prejudice. Claims 6, 7, 9, 10, 11
and 13 have each been amended, such that each claim now depends
from newly added independent claim 14. Newly added dependent claim
15 depends from independent claim 14, and is based upon originally

filed claim 8. Newly added dependent claim 16 depends from independent claim 14, and is based upon originally filed claim 2.

The Applicants comment upon the prior art rejection of the claims over *Lampert* in view of *Hayashida* as follows.

The present invention is directed to a process for treating a semiconductor wafer, comprising polishing the semiconductor wafer; immediately after polishing the semiconductor wafer removing the semiconductor wafer from a polishing plate; bringing the semiconductor wafer into contact with an aqueous treatment agent solution for oxidizing a polished surface of the semiconductor wafer by action of the aqueous treatment solution; and the wafer being brought into contact with the aqueous treatment agent solution in a manner which is selected from the group consisting of (a) spraying the semiconductor wafer with the treatment agent solution, (b) dipping the semiconductor wafer into the treatment agent solution and (c) applying the treatment agent solution to the polished surface of the semiconductor wafer by means of a cloth which has been moistened with the treatment agent.

The main advantage of the present invention over the cited prior art is that polishing the wafers and subjecting the wafers to an oxidizing treatment is separated both with regard to time and with regard to place. This is because both processes are incompatible in the sense that adding the oxidizing agent to the

polishing medium impairs the polishing medium and vice versa.

According to *Lampert et al.* the oxidizing component is added before the polishing of the wafer has been completed (See col.2, lines 22-26 and claim 1 of *Lampert*) and without having removed the wafer from the polishing pad before the oxidizing agent is added. Hence, *Lampert* does not suggest subjecting the wafer to an oxidizing treatment immediately after the polishing and removing the wafer before applying the oxidizing treatment agent solution as claimed in the present invention.

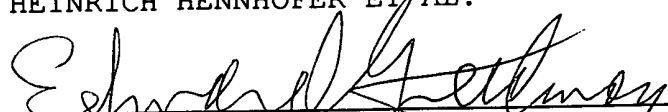
The deficiencies in the teachings of the primary reference *Lampert* are not overcome by the disclosure of the secondary reference to *Hayashida*. *Hayashida* in column 7 in lines 49 to 50 teaches that the silicon wafers can be immersed into the treating solution. However, there is no teaching as to the timing of this immersion by *Hayashida*.

In summary, claims 1 and 3 to 5 have been canceled; claims 6, 7, 9, 10, 11 and 13 have been amended; and claims 14, 15 and 16 have been added. In view of these amendments, it is believed that the invention, and all the claims, are patentable over all the prior art applied by the Patent Examiner under 35 U.S.C. 103. Withdrawal of this ground of rejection is respectfully requested. A prompt notification of allowability is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

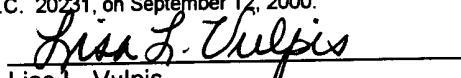
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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to:
Assistant Commissioner of Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, on September 12, 2000.


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